



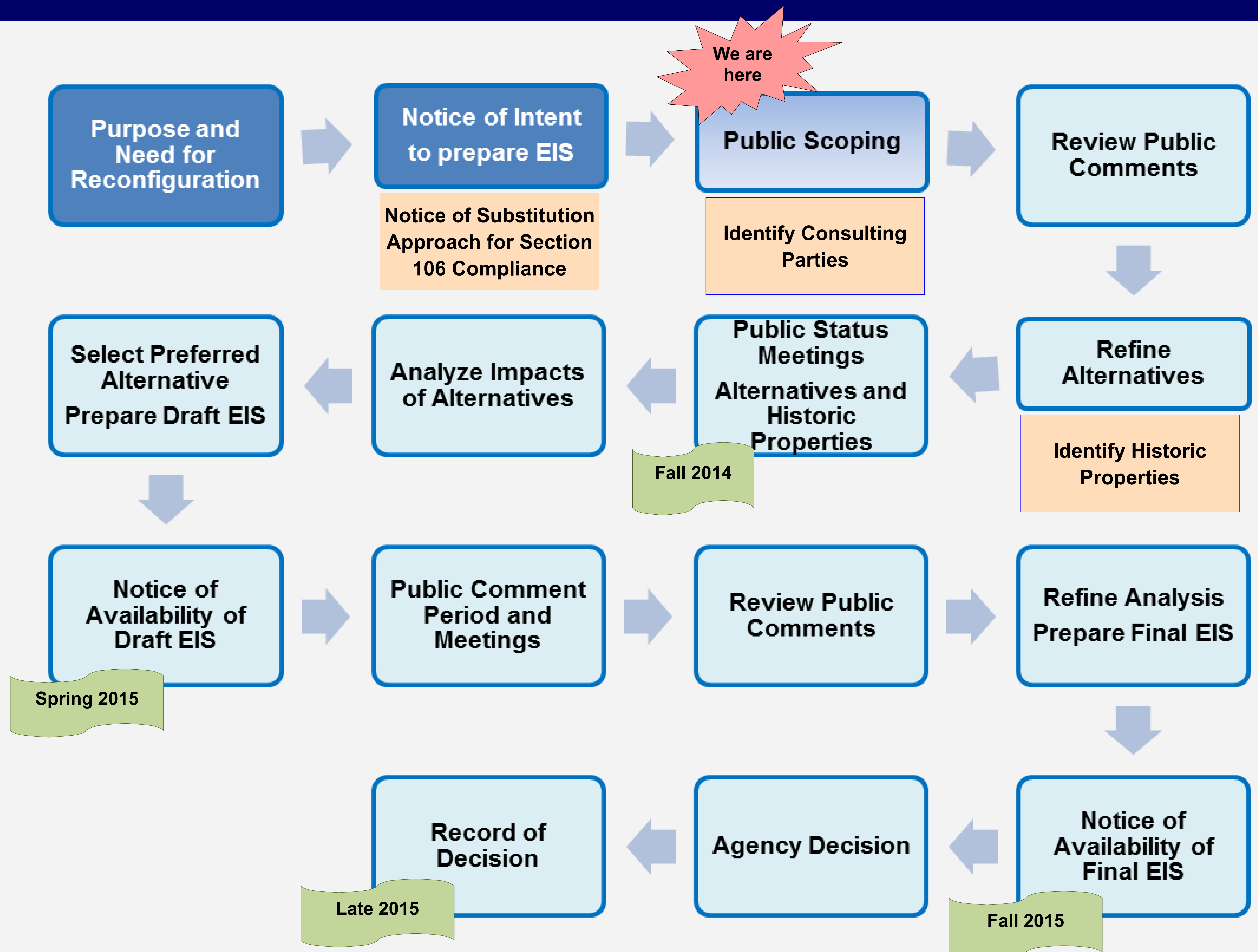
Environmental Impact Statement for Reconfiguration of VA Black Hills Health Care System

The *National Environmental Policy Act* requires federal agencies to evaluate the environmental impacts of their actions.

This EIS will:

- State the purpose and need for the health care system reconfiguration
- Describe a range of alternatives for implementing the proposed action
- Analyze the potential for environmental impacts of the alternatives
- Identify possible mitigation

Compliance with Section 106 of the *National Historic Preservation Act* is integrated into this NEPA process.





Public Involvement: EIS for Reconfiguration of VA Black Hills Health Care System

Scoping includes:

- Determining the scope and the significant issues to be analyzed in depth in the EIS.
- Identifying and eliminating from detailed study the issues that are not significant or not related to the agency decision at hand.
- Identifying environmental review and consultation requirements.

Scoping is your opportunity to provide input to the alternatives and help us improve our analysis of their potential environmental impacts.

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Dec 2011 | VA announced the proposal to reconfigure the Black Hills Health Care System. |
| 2011–2012 | VA held 15 public town hall meetings to seek Veteran and stakeholder feedback. |
| May 2012 | VA held a <i>National Historic Preservation Act</i> Section 106 consultation meeting related to the reconfiguration proposal. |
| May 16 – Aug 16, 2014 | Public scoping period, with public scoping meetings. |
| Fall 2014 | Public status update meetings—details on alternatives and historic properties |
| Spring 2015 | Draft EIS published for public review and comment. |
| Fall 2015 | Final EIS available to public |



The “purpose and need” element of an EIS explains why the action being proposed is needed, and serves as the basis for developing a reasonable range of alternatives.

Need: underlying condition or problem that leads the agency to propose the action.

Purpose: objectives of proposed action that address the underlying condition or correct the problem.



Purpose and Need for Reconfiguration of VA Black Hills Health Care System

Purpose of Action

Provide quality, safe, accessible health care for Veterans well into the 21st century by:

- Enhancing and maintaining quality and safety of care in the 100,000-square-mile VA Black Hills Health Care System service area
- Replacing aging, ADA-noncompliant buildings for Veterans in Residential Rehabilitation and Treatment Programs and Community-Based Outpatient Clinics
- Increasing access to care closer to Veterans’ homes
- Reducing out-of-pocket expenses for Veteran’s travel

Need for Action

- Veteran population centers are not in the same location as current VA facilities
- Difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified staff at current Hot Springs facility
- Difficulty maintaining high-quality, safe, and accessible care
- Long distances and travel times to receive specialty care
- Current residential treatment facilities and locations limit care available to single parent Veterans and handicapped Veterans, and limit the enhancement of the recovery model of care
- Higher operating costs than financial allocations



- | Location | Alternatives* | | | | | |
|-------------|--|---|--|--|---|----------------|
| | A | B | C | D | E | H
No Action |
| Hot Springs | <div>CBOC</div> <div>Existing VA Campus</div> | <div>CBOC</div> <div>RRTP
100 beds</div> <div>Existing VA Campus</div> | <div>CBOC</div> <div>Building 12 Renovation</div> <div>RRTP–100 beds</div> <div>Domiciliary Renovation</div> | <div>CBOC</div> <div>RRTP
24 beds</div> <div>Existing VA Campus</div> | <div>Continue inpatient services</div> <div>Building 12 Renovation</div> <div>RRTP–200 beds</div> <div>Domiciliary Renovation</div> <div>Other Upgrades / Renovations
New programs & services</div> | No Change |
| Rapid City | <div>MSOC</div> <div>RRTP
100 beds</div> | <div>MSOC</div> | <div>MSOC</div> | <div>MSOC</div> <div>RRTP
76 beds</div> | No Change | No Change |

MSOC = Multi Specialty Outpatient Clinic



Affected Environment

The geographic range of the analysis is determined by the alternatives and may vary by resource, due to the different nature of potential impacts.

For example:

- Potential impacts to aesthetics would be assessed at the locations of specific VA facilities.
- Potential impacts to socioeconomics would be evaluated on a local and regional basis.

The affected environment for each resource will be clearly described in the EIS.

Analysis of Environmental Consequences

The EIS will evaluate the potential impacts of the alternatives on the resources that make up the environment:

Human Environment

Aesthetics

Cultural resources

Noise

Land use

Socioeconomics

Community services

Solid and hazardous materials

Transportation and parking

Utilities

Environmental justice

Physical Environment

Air quality

Floodplains and wetlands

Geology and soils

Hydrology and water quality

Biological Environment

Wildlife and habitat

Other issues for analysis:

Cumulative impacts

Controversy

Unavoidable adverse impacts

Mitigation and monitoring



Section 106 of the *National Historic Preservation Act:*

Federal agencies must:

- Identify and assess effects of actions on historic properties
- Avoid, minimize, or mitigate those effects
- Provide the Advisory council on Historic Preservation a reasonable opportunity to comment

Agencies are encouraged to coordinate Section 106 compliance with NEPA.

Federal regulations permit “substitution” of NEPA review for the Section 106 process. Historic properties analysis is integrated into NEPA public involvement, agency coordination, impact analysis, and the agency decision.

Integrating *National Historic Preservation Act* Section 106 Compliance into the NEPA Process

Notify Consulting Parties and Initiate Consultation

- ◆ Secretary of the Interior, State Historic Preservation Officers, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Tribal Historic Preservation Officers and other tribal representatives, and other stakeholders.
- ◆ Identify/discuss historic preservation issues associated with the Black Hills Health Care System reconfiguration alternatives.

Identify Historic Properties and Traditional Cultural Properties

- ◆ Establish areas of potential effect for the EIS alternatives.
- ◆ Identify known and potential cultural resources and their status or eligibility for listing on the National Register.
- ◆ Document findings as the Affected Environment for cultural resources in the EIS.

Assess Potential Effects

- ◆ Evaluate potential impacts to cultural resources using Section 106 criteria.
- ◆ With consulting parties, identify measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate effects on historic properties.
- ◆ Document findings in the EIS as part of the Environmental Consequences and Mitigation Measures for cultural resources impacts.

Additional Consultation and Public Involvement

- ◆ Provide adequate opportunity for consulting parties’ input prior to finalizing the Draft EIS.
- ◆ Notify National Park Service of potential effects on the Battle Mountain Sanitarium, a National Historic Landmark.
- ◆ Provide ongoing information to the public on the Section 106 process and its integration into the NEPA process.
- ◆ Document all Section 106 consultation activities in the EIS and its Administrative Record.

Concluding Section 106 Consultation

- ◆ If preferred alternative can potentially affect a historic property, identify mitigation strategy: Memorandum of Agreement, Programmatic Agreement, other binding mitigation commitment made in the VA’s Record of Decision.
- ◆ Implement the selected alternative and any associated mitigation.